

Feature Article.....GM's Small Bus

President's Note: This article was initially submitted by member E. J. Faust for our Favorite Bus column. Because it was lengthy, interesting and informative it qualified for front page material. E.J., aka Ed, now retired (he admits to being retired "for a number of years!") was in the bus industry, as he said, "back in the good old days." We assumed he meant when transit services were still provided by private enterprise. His employer, Auch Inter-Borough Transit Company, was based in Montgomery County, Borough of Conshohocken, PA. Auch operated fixed route transit service, contract school bus service to Catholic schools, and charters and tours, with a fleet that was never over 20 buses. Following is Ed's article.

In responding to MBT's request for articles on my favorite bus, this article, albeit longer than most of the favorite bus articles, is dedicated to the small GM gas buses built in the 1949 to 1963 period.

Moderate ridership, physical constraints, tight turns and often end of lines requiring buses to back up (never a good practice) for the return trip, and our management's desire to refrain from operating diesel equipment, somewhat dictated running buses no longer than 30 feet long.

In the early 1940's, prior to my joining the company, small Mack buses were used on the lines. After World War II, Mack's post-war "small" bus was the C-33, basically heavy and expensive to buy and operate. Auch's alternative to replace the pre-war fleet was the basic Ford Transit. These buses provided all of our service through 1948.

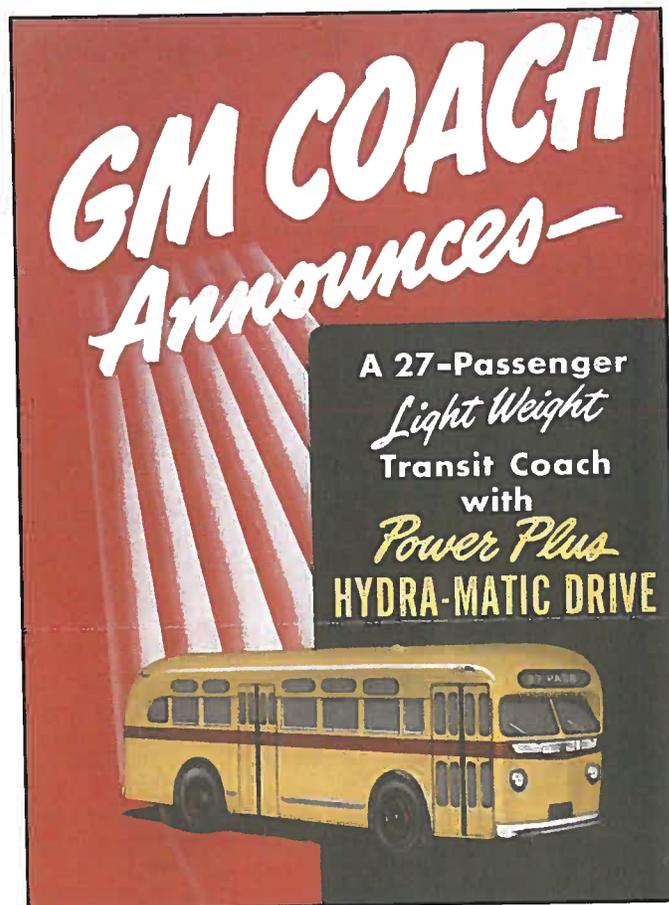
As the "cracker box" Ford was phased out, Ford's new body style, the 8MB, was considered by management. Before an order was cut, in-service demonstrators were supplied by the following "small bus" manufacturers: Superior (the Avenue), Fitzjohn, Beaver, and Checker Transit. For some reason, this demonstrator was actually purchased by the management and remained in our fleet, mostly for school service, for a number of years.

The aesthetics of the 8MB were a vast improvement over the "cracker box" Ford, but underneath the bus was standard Ford so our management purchased some 8MB. The new body had some flaws and there were some other concerns so no additional 8MB were purchased.

In the early part of 1949, the Philadelphia area GM salesman brought an early TGH 2708 to our property and allowed us to try it over our busiest route – Philadelphia (Chestnut Hill) to Norris-town. I had a chance to drive it while it was on the property. WOW, I was hooked!

My personal car at the time was an Oldsmobile 98. With the Hydramatic transmission in the little GM (the same as my car) I felt like I was simply driving my own car instead of a 25 foot bus (the 2708s were only 25 feet long). This little bus was perky and just a lot of fun to drive.

With feedback from all corners of the operation, maintenance, operations, and drivers, our company ordered two 2708s followed by orders for 3101s and 3102s.



The last order of 3102s was for 5 buses – for us, that was a large order. We always sent our own drivers out to Pontiac, Michigan to pick up new buses. Once we started ordering from GM, my turn finally came in 1954 – driving our number 81 all the way back to Pennsylvania in 2 ½ days.

I had a lot of respect for the "mini-GMs". They financially saved many small companies nationwide by providing operators with a quality small bus to replace aging equipment or to operate service over underutilized lines, even in cities such as Louisville, Miami, and Washington, D.C.

Referring to Bill Luke's "Old Look Buses," I noted that there were a total of 2,658 small GMs (2708, 3101, and 3102 models) built from 1949 through 1963. The successors in the form of the 3501s came along after I left the company to pursue another career so I had no experience with them.

I have enjoyed sharing this with my fellow busmen. (I must admit I had some help in putting my story on paper.)

E.J. Faust

From the Board Room

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Transportation Authority
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Mark Watson

We are entering 2016 with some new industry board members and an ambitious set of goals.

The 4 new industry board members elected in the fall with nearly 65% of our membership voting, resulted in the following:

David Schmidt – Prevost Car
David Millhouser – Bus and Coach News columnist
John Oakman – Coach USA
Mark Szyperski – On Your Mark Transportation

The above personnel, all well known in the industry, coupled with the rest of the MBT board will help us to achieve our 2016 goals:

1. Grow the membership (especially corporate members)
2. Start limited fundraising through personal contacts
3. Revise the agreement with the AACA Museum to reduce monthly costs (already well underway as you read this)
4. Reduce the size of our fleet by selling off several buses
5. Search for additional storage space for our fleet
6. Trim operating expenses
7. Continue the Adopt A Bus program (over 3/4 of our fleet is now "adopted")
8. Seek out a sponsorship for each of the 4 newsletters

On point 3 above, we want the membership to know that, each month, the MBT and the AACA Museum swap checks. This was established over 10 years ago when we moved into the Museum and, at that, was considered a clean way to match off monies owed to the AACA Museum vs. the income the Museum owed us each month – the amount the MBT owed the Museum was

always much greater than what we received.

The AACA Museum executive board as well as our own board has approved a new accounting system which should give us financial stability for a number of years.

MBT will be represented at the following events:

..Pennsylvania Automobile Show (Harrisburg)
..Pennsylvania Bus Association Marketplace
..Tennessee Motor Coach Association meeting
..UMA EXPO

We also plan to change the bus display on the Museum floor (although not every bus) twice a year to keep the display fresh to our viewing public.

As we announced in our last issue of Bus Musings, we did have to, unfortunately, increase our entire dues structure. We want the membership to know that dues are used for operational expenses, the newsletter, and, to some extent, the fleet, supplemented, in part, by the Adopt A Bus program and various, bus specific, donations, such as entire restorations and paint and body work.

We look forward to a great 2016 – don't forget our annual Spring Bus Fling - Friday, June 3rd Reception and Saturday, June 4th Spring Bus Fling. **Many thanks** to MBT member, Becky Tollens, for securing the group rate for overnight rooms at Spring Hill Suites. See the flyer on page 9 for details.

Belated, but sincere, Happy New Year!

Getting to Know Our Fleet

Our oldest, of two in the fleet, is our 1924 Fageol.

The president of Peninsula Charter Lines, East Palo Alto, California, Mike Demeter, donated this transit style Fageol to us.

Its original owner, we were advised, was Pacific Electric Railway, Los Angeles, California.

It provided transit service for Peninsula Charter and was retired before World War II – Mike told us that it was returned to active transit service during the conflict when every transit vehicle operable was pressed into service.

The bus, equipped with a working fare box, was immediately placed on display in the Museum where it joins the other two buses from the 1920's, our 1927 Fageol (intercity version) and Fullington's 1929 Yellow.

The older buses are of interest to many of the guests in the Museum so even when we change out the display area we seldom consider moving them to our storage garage. By the way, this Fageol is in running condition.



Mike Demeter donated the 1945 Ford Transit to us the year after donating this Fageol (see article regarding the restoration of the Ford under "Along the Line.")

Fleet Committee Report by Ken McNelis

2015 RECOGNITION OF MUSEUM FLEET COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS

The Committee would like to thank our members who went above and beyond their membership dues to help cutting grass and weeds, washing and detailing busses, maintaining our busses, and moving busses for display.

17 volunteer members donated a total of 353 hours of service during 2015. Those members who met the Board of Directors requirement (attend a minimum of 3 full work sessions) to be recognized and receive a free meal at the Annual Meeting are as follows: **Terry Cosentino, John Lenhart, Ken McNelis, Tom Mozer, and John Stoudt**. We would be remiss if we did not thank **Jim Tay and Ed Wolf** for all their hours of time and mechanical skills. We could not accomplish all we do without them.

Some members say they live too far from the Annex here in Hershey, in some cases this is true. But we would like to acknowledge 3 members who find a way to make a lengthy journey to help us at work sessions. They are **Lynn and Michael Burshtin** of Richland, N.J. (near Atlantic City) and **Jim Kalin** of Green Port, N.Y. (Long Island). We thank you for your time and efforts.

2016 FLEET COMMITTEE - WORK SESSIONS

We would like to announce the following dates for the Spring 2016 Work Sessions at the Annex. The dates are:

- Saturday, March 19, 2016
- Saturday, April 16, 2016
- Saturday, May 14, 2016
- Saturday, May 28, 2016
- Thursday, June 2, 2016
- Friday, June 3, 2016
- Saturday, June 4, 2016
- Saturday, June 25, 2016

All work sessions start at the Annex at 8:30 A.M. and run to 3:30 P.M. unless the time has to be adjusted.

Volunteers are asked to please call Ken McNelis (610-203-7998) or Tom Mozer (717-343-0058) to let them know if you are planning to attend any or all of the work sessions. This way work can be planned and you can be notified before you leave home, if a particular work session has to be rescheduled, canceled, or the time needs to be adjusted.

Please consult the Museum website or Mark Watson's post on Facebook for any deletions or additions that may be necessary at the last moment.

FLEET REPORT

This Fall we were able to park 10 busses inside the Annex and store 10 outside the building. Seven busses are off site for repairs, rehab., movie shoot, or paint jobs. All busses are now titled and license plates will be secured by Spring.

Members **Tom Mozer, Ken McNelis, Jim Tay, and Ed Wolf** attended an Auction held on January 9, 2016 at Conestoga Tours in Lancaster, Pa. They were able to secure many needed parts and tools for use at the Annex.

Work is being planned for the Spring work sessions to address

the following items:

- make needed repairs to each bus
- clean up the trailers and the Annex interior
- inventory all parts and place in parts bins
- catalogue all maintenance and parts manuals
- wash and detail all busses

We could sure use your help with this. You do not have to be a mechanic to do any of the above items. See you in April or May?



MBT AT UNITED MOTORCOACH ASSOCIATION EXPO—ATLANTA, GA

Thank you to Mark Szyperski for representing MBT at UMA's Expo held January 31—February 4 in Atlanta. A special thank you to Ken Presley, UMA, for a booth in Bus Row, and to Mitch Guralnick from MCI for the motorcoach, number 3 off the MCI line.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT -- DONATED FLEET PARTS

The Fleet Committee would like to thank the following individuals for their donations to be used on our fleet:

Ralph Ciccone of Eighty Four, PA for his donation of a complete set of original ceiling lights for our Beaver that he donated.

John Vickrey of Dearing, GA for his donation of 5 GMC nose plate medallions and an alternator, regulator, and parts for a 4104. John plans to deliver the big items to the Museum in May, 2016.

Darrell Gerke of Conestoga Tours, Lancaster, PA for his donation of a pit oil drain tank, MCI light assemblies, and Eagle parts.

2016 Board Meetings

- March 2
- April 5
- May 3
- June 7
- July 5
- August 2
- September 6
- October 4
- November 1
- December 6

Spring Bus Fling

June 3-4, 2016

Annual Meeting

October 29, 2016

Regular Board meetings are held at the AACA Museum in Hershey at 6:30 pm and are open to all MBT members.

Along the Line

Mannequins....in our quest for additional mannequins to display the various uniforms and hats donated to us over the past few years (including several which, unfortunately, went through the Flood of 2011, but thoroughly cleaned and restored by a local cleaning firm) we are happy to report that we have received a commitment to donate, to us, a group of mannequins from a Philadelphia area department store which will be closing in late April. If this comes to fruition, we should be able to display all of our uniforms.

Spring Bus Fling.....Plans are moving along for our annual "bus weekend" – June 3-4. It looks as though we will have a sponsor for the Friday evening reception. This, new in the 2015 event, was well received by everyone and also gave, of importance, the vendors a chance to display, and sell, their items to the "early birds" before the larger Saturday crowds arrive. Last year's event had two "silent partners" as sponsors. Although free to the vendors and others, we did receive a nice amount of donations which were credited to the Spring Fling and added to our general operating account. More details to come.

Note to the vendors – you will be receiving an advance "tickler" letter advising you of the 2016 setup –we have no plans to increase the table rentals or setup.

Mark WatsonMark is the face behind the MBT Facebook page and, over the past few years, has done a Yeoman's job maintaining that for us. The MBT Facebook page receives an impressive amount of hits in the course of a month – especially around Fling time. We have added Mark to our list of MBT advisors since he has been such a valuable asset to us.

Tom Collins...the MBT President has retired from Capital Area Transit (CAT) where he has been working in the Service Planning section since January 2006. Tom accepted a position with CAT immediately after retiring from SEPTA in the same month. Tom's career in the industry started at Conestoga Transportation Company in the Fall of 1960. His nearly 55 years in the industry included jobs at Conestoga, Safeway Trailways, Carl R. Bieber Tourways, Trans-Bridge Lines, and ATE Management before joining SEPTA in 1986.

Like our Secretary John Dockendorf, who retired from PennDOT nearly 2 years ago, Tom plans to devote more time to the MBT. Tom also plans to assist SEPTA in their traffic department on an as-needed basis. Tom's direct mobile phone number is 610-716-2328.

Gift Shop...Speaking of John Dockendorf, he has done an excellent job of stocking our gift shop with books, old schedules, and some great models (including Corgis). Many, if not most, of the items have been donated to us, with no reservations, as to what we would do with them (i.e. display or sell). In 2015, gift shop sales were higher than 2014 thanks to John's efforts and the assistance from advisors John Lenhart, Dino Mandros, and Terry Cosentino.

Remember your MBT card entitles you to 10% off bus-only items – and you will receive an additional 10% off if you visit us on June 3 and 4 during Spring Fling.

Recent donations;
(Including Adopt a Bus)
Terry Cosentino
Robert Sauer
Lakeland Bus Lines
Mark Watson
David Schmidt
Gary Sardone
Tom Collins
Harry Bliewise
Dallas Krapf
Penn Highway Transit / Darrell Gerke
Corporate Member – Penn Highway Transit
(a.k.a. Conestoga Tours)

Penn Highway Transit—Effective with the close of business on December 31, 2015, Penn Highway Transit (d.b.a Conestoga Tours) ceased doing business as an operating bus company. Conestoga Tours was created in 1974 when Red Rose Transit Authority took over the fixed route local and suburban bus service in Lancaster County – from both Conestoga Transportation Company and Penn Highway Transit Company. Charter and tour services, and the intercity equipment, was continued under Penn Highway Transit Company. Over the years Conestoga tours operated an interesting fleet of GM, Eagle, MCI, Van Hool, and Prevost coaches in tour and charter services. Another MBT member, Executive Coach, has purchased 4 of Conestoga's Prevosts and will operate Conestoga's book of tours.

This was an interesting molding of two longtime, respected, MBT corporate members.

THE BUS TRANSPORTATION REGION

The Bus Transportation Region is a "chapter" of the Antique Automobile Club of American (AACA). As such, we are region number 034 of nearly 100 in the United States. Members of the Museum of Bus Transportation are encouraged to consider joining the AACA. Yearly membership in-

cludes a subscription of their first class quarterly publication known as "Antique Automobile."

Membership is \$35.00 per year. Additional info on AACA membership may be obtained by calling 717-534-1910.

TWO RESTORATIONS

We have two restorations underway. Our Peninsula Charter 1945 Ford is being repaired and repainted (retaining its original green and white colors) at Perfect Body Company. It is progressing nicely, and our plans are to unveil it at our Spring Bus Fling.

The Ford was donated to us by its original owner Mike Demeter (Peninsula Charter).

We thank the team at Perfect Body for offering to repaint the bus for us.

The Brill C-31 (school bus version) is having body and paint work done at Supreme Body Company. Donated to us by Ralph Ciccone, this bus, as mentioned in an earlier issue of Musings, started life at Reading School District. This bus should also be finished by the Spring Fling.

Our plans are to place both of these buses on the Museum floor as part of our next change out.

MEMBER GLEN KELLER

Glen, one of several Canadian MBT members, hails from Prescott, Ontario, sent us this photo of a very unusual White he is restoring.

Glen did not provide us with much data on the unit, but admits he doesn't have much background on the bus. Our "master bus archive" expert, Bob Smith, was puzzled by this one as well.



We'll be anxious to see the restoration.

(Continued on page 6)



2016 Adopt A Bus Program

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

Thank you for your interest in adopting a bus. We appreciate your support in interest in keeping the MBT fleet healthy!

Please select Option #1 or #2 below and indicate if you would like to adopt one bus or the entire fleet:

OPTION #1: Enclosed is my donation of \$300.00.

I would like to adopt bus _____ (funds will be used for storage and maintenance expenses for this particular unit)

OR

I would like to spread my donation of \$300 over the entire fleet.

OPTION #2: I pledge \$25 per month for 12 months for a total of \$300.

I would like to adopt bus _____

OR

I would like to spread my donation over the entire fleet

GUIDELINES:

- By adopting a particular bus selected above, your name will be displayed on the description plaque if the bus is in the Museum or on the windshield if the bus is stored.
- If you choose to spread your donation over the entire fleet, your name will be placed on a special plaque which will be placed on the wall of the Museum near the buses.
- The Adopt a Bus Program support is for one fiscal year.
- The Museum of Bus Transportation is a 501(c)3 organization; your fee may be used as a tax deduction.

Thank you in advance for your generosity and continued support of the MBT!

Please mail completed form and check made out to the Museum of Bus Transportation to:

Museum of Bus Transportation
161 Museum Drive
Hershey, PA 17033

Along the Line continued

(Continued from page 4)

In late December a Museum visitor from New Jersey handed our MBT docent the photo on the right and asked him if he knew the two gentlemen in it.

Immediately the gentlemen on the left was identified as the late John P. Hoschek, Jr. John was the quintessential bus fan of all time! He created what is today's Motor Bus Society, Inc. and was well known and respected in the bus industry. We had no information on the bus operator standing on the step, however.



We traced this photo back to June of 1959 when John started a local bus service with a company called Penn Valley Transit.

The bus was a 1949 Southern F-31M which was acquired from Portsmouth (VA) Transit.

From time to time we are approached, directly or by mail, to address bus related items. Often by searching or reaching out to our connections we can, usually, come up with an answer, but not always!

TIMETABLES and SCHEDULES

From time to time we receive calls regarding the donation of timetables and schedules to the MBT.

Sometimes they are simply shipped to us hoping that we'll have a place to display or store them.

We would prefer not to accept timetables, schedules, and transfers as we have very little storage space for them and have a very limited amount of glass display cases we can place on the Museum floor.

If you have material of this type you are considering donating, please call us at 717-566-7100 X 119. We may have a suggestion.

"PICK OF THE LITTER"

We acquired a copy of this excellent book by Kenneth R. Hixson describing the history of Southeastern Greyhound Lines through the 1930s and rapidly expanding 1940s. Although we were advised that this book has been around for awhile, we had not seen a copy but would, indeed, recommend it as *must* reading – especially if you are an ACF IC 37/41 fan!

My Favorite Bus by the late Gerald Smith

Several years ago, prior to his untimely early passing, Gerald "Jerry" Smith, then Vice President – Traffic for Capitol Bus Company (Capitol Trailways) had some interesting comments (all, basically, good) about his favorite bus – the GM PD 4901.

Jerry headed up the traffic and scheduling department for North Star Lines, Grand Rapids, Michigan before accepting a position with Capitol Trailways. During his tenure with North Star, which also included a period of time as a coach operator North Star acquired THE (one and only) PD-4901.

This coach had operated briefly for Greyhound between New York City and Philadelphia, but they never purchased it – and neither did any other operator. Repowered with the 8V-71 made the coach more saleable and North Star purchased it adding it to their all-GM fleet.

Jerry said it created a lot of interest whenever it pulled into the Detroit terminal or other points along the North Star route network. Other bus operators would make comments such as "how is the weather up there?", since the coach was higher than the, then, standard 4104.

This high-level coach was often assigned to the Upper Michigan service because of the large amount of package express that route generated on a daily basis. The larger baggage compartments on the 4901 handled this with ease, said Jerry.

We had this excellent photo of the coach in North Star service taken by the late T.C. VanDegrift, Jr. It came to the MBT archives from Bill Luke several years ago.

This was Jerry's favorite coach...well understood.

Of note, with this article, MBT member Bob Faulkner is completing a wooden model of the PD 4901.



Model Bus Musings by Doug Campbell

After such a heavy winter snowstorm here in the mid-Atlantic U.S., it's a great time to be inside enjoying your hobby of model bus collecting!

First this month is a **bright orange plastic "HO" (4 1/2" long) scale model "school bus"** (below) which resembles an International, and was issued back in 2003 in Germany as an advertising promotion for "Jagermeister," which I believe is a brand of German beer. It was issued (made in China) by a German advertising firm Vierke Marketing Service, and was probably only available as an on-package promotion in German liquor stores when "Jagermeister" beer was purchased. It is listed/pictured in my 2064-page color reference book, listing/picturing over (yes!) 14,000 such HO miniature German, mostly liquor, advertising trucks and buses! (Molter's Brauerei mini Trucks, 2008 edition). These little vehicles are highly collected in Europe and are usually packaged with purchase of a product. By this year there are probably thousands more of these colorful little models produced! They are listed by the hundreds on European E-Bay, and are highly collectable!

MTH Model Trains of Columbia, Maryland released recently to go along with its **Alaska Railroad** trains, this heavy die-cast Alaska Railroad Model Bus. It sure resembles a GM silversides and was originally issued in both Greyhound and Trailways graphics some years ago. My model has an "Anchorage" destination sign, and is listed as Item no. 30-50068 in the MTH Electric Trains "Railking" line (www.railking.com), and should be easily available at your local MTH model train dealer. It is about 1/43 scale, and is about



8" long, with rubber tires. I'm not sure such a coach ever existed in real-life back in the 50's or so, but during a recent vacation in Alaska, we did see many new Alaska Railroad buses!

Just last year, CORGI Premiums, released to the Canadian market, this colorful, exact fleet replica of a Toronto Transit Commission New Look (Fishbowl) GM coach... purchased by TTC in real life 1977-1983. The last was taken out of service in December of 2011. The model is 1:50 scale, 9" long, fully die-cast, and listed as one of a 2000 model production run. Really a very colorful model bus!



Another recent release in Hachette Collections model buses of the world, sold on European newsstands with a great historical magazine about the real bus (mine is in French!), and the model made in Bangladesh. This model is unfortunately mostly plastic, and is a most realistic model of a 1972 Mercedes Benz O 302 coach, used by many European touring companies. This one is 1/43 scale 8" long, in bright red/white livery of "Rundfahrten PULAY"...a German bus operator. It has full interior details and a die-cast metal base.

(Continued on page 8)

Model Bus Musings continued

(Continued from page 7)

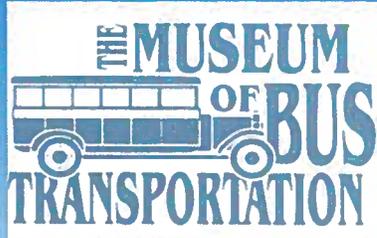


Finally this month we'll look at a brand new release from American Heritage Models, the die-cast 1:50 scale 1948 ACF-BRILL IC -41 Coach in Southeastern Greyhound's Historic fleet graphics. The details are amazing, although the \$90+ price tag seems high for the quality. All the interior details are there, and side vent screens are even done in fine wire mesh to look authentic! This is a great new addition to our model bus fleets. At long last a good ACF BRILL model!

Happy Collecting!

Another truly wonderful release from Hachette Collection's European news agent model buses is a fully heavy die-cast 1/43 GM (even has GM emblem on front, but no licensing information!) TDH-3610 (model cast as 3714) is the "Rosa Parks" bus; the real example sitting at the Henry Ford Museum in Michigan. It represents a 1955 coach. The model is just loaded with tiny details, including the correct ad panels on the sides representing the famous bus from the Montgomery, Alabama segregation history of December 1955. The correct "Hanna Paints" ad is on the rear of the bus along with correct license plate. Full interior is included on this very heavy metal model bus!





presents

2016 Spring Fling A Bus and Motorcoach Show

June 3-4, 2016 in Hershey, PA

DATE. Saturday, June 4, 2016

LOCATION. Antique Automobile Museum Campus (indoors and outside), Rt. 39, Hershey, PA

TIMES. 8:00 am—4:00 pm

ADMISSION. Free to MBT members. Regular admission will be reduced to only \$7 for non-MBT members from \$12!

NEED AN OVERNIGHT ROOM? Call Spring Hill Suites (across from the museum), 717-583-2222. To obtain the group rate of \$129 per night, ask for the rate for the *Spring Fling for the Museum of Bus Transportation*.

Friday, June 3 | 5:30 - 8:30 PM

Reception in Bus and Vendor Display Area with fun, food, beverages, and fellowship

FEATURING

MODES OF BUS TRANSPORTATION

Intercity, transit, school bus, motorcoach conversions.

BUS STUFF TO PURCHASE!

Tables of bus and transportation artifacts for purchase!

VIEW THE MUSEUM'S RESTORED FLEET!

A Shuttle bus will run every

hour between the Museum and MBT's storage Annex to view the MBT fleet. Donations will be accepted for the shuttle bus to offset costs. Shuttle bus provided by **Wolf's Bus Lines, York Springs, PA.**

FOOD AND BEVERAGES AVAILABLE

Special food court will be open in the Museum



Museum of Bus Transportation
161 Museum Drive
Hershey, PA 17033

Winter 2016 Bus Musings



Mark Szyperski
1427 Brighton Circle
Old Hickory, TN 37138

3713834645 0008

